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Report/Article Title Memorandum: Report of Investigation into Possible Herbicide Damage at Vietnamese Naval Compound at Da Nang, from Cpt. Ray W. Bills to III MAF Chemical Officer (Cpt. Lott), 26 September 1969

Journal/Book Title

Year 0000

Month/Day

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Number of Images 6

Description Notes Includes these attachments : Memorandum on Reported Herbicide Damage (very poor print quality); one page handwritten notes; map of Da Nang Combat Base; and one typed page on prohibiting movement of drums into Danang City.

Chemical Operations Division

MACJ3-09

26 September 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: III MAF CHEMICAL OFFICER (CPT LOTT)

SUBJECT: Report of Investigation into Possible Herbicide Damage at
Vietnamese Naval Compound at Da Nang

1. On 24 Sep 69 the III MAF Chemical Officer, CPT Lott, and CPT Bills from HQ MACV visited the Vietnamese Naval Compound at Da Nang to investigate possible herbicide damage. Personnel contacted were:
 - a. LCDR James - US Advisor.
 - b. Mr. Xuan - Chief of Staff (VN).
 - c. LT Shirk - US Advisor.
2. All the Australian pine (casuarina) located on the compound appeared to be dead. Most of the broadleaf trees were either completely void of foliage or in various stages of losing their leaves. Wherever it was possible to observe new growth, the growth showed the effects of herbicide. The broadleaf vine growing on the slopes around the hilltop housing compound also showed herbicide damage. The herbicide damage was limited to the Navy compound. Vegetation growing on low hills near the compound did not show herbicide damage.
3. While surveying the compound a total of eight ORANGE herbicide barrels were found. Four of these were located in the POL yard; two of them had a strong odor of herbicide. The remaining four barrels were located near a signal van and were filled with gasoline. The gasoline was used to operate a power generator. It was explained to LCDR James and Mr. Xuan that the gasoline in the barrels may contain small quantities of herbicide, and when burned in the generator engine the exhaust produced will contain vaporized herbicide capable of effecting vegetation in the immediate area. It was also pointed out that vapors from residual herbicide left in empty barrels are a potential source of herbicide damage to nearby vegetation.

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4. LCMR James and Mr. Xuan stated that the signal van and generator had been on the compound for approximately four months. The severe damage to the broadleaf trees surrounding the hilltop housing compound has occurred since the generator has been in operation.

5. It was recommended that all herbicide barrels be made unuseable and removed from the compound and a control system be established to prevent herbicide barrels from entering the compound in the future.

RAY W. BILLS
CPT, USA
Cnl Opns Officer

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LTC Simonson, MACJ3-053

HEADQUARTERS
III Marine Amphibious Force
Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
222 San Francisco 96602

30-9/1-5
2 10 1

To: Commanding General
First Coastal Zone Advisor, Naval Advisory Group, USMACV Naval
Advisory Team 143, PO Box San Francisco 96602

Subject: Reported Herbicide Damage

Re: (a) Ltr, First Coastal Zone Advisor, dtd 16 Sep 69
(b) MACV msg 201124Z Jul 69

Encl: (1) Rpt, U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam Memo MACV-01
of 2, Sep 69

1. On 16 September 1969, the Chemical Officer of this Headquarters visited Quang Naval Base to investigate the tree and vegetation damage reported by reference (a). The exact cause of this damage could not be ascertained. However, the damage definitely did not result from aerial chemical or herbicide operations since none have been conducted in the vicinity of the Naval Base.

2. In response to a request by this headquarters a plant pathologist from the Chemical Operations Division visited your base on 24 September. A gasoline generator, which is filled from 55-gallon used herbicide drums, was noted. It was learned from officers at the base that the generator was installed approximately four months ago and that the reported damage began appearing about three months ago. The damage is entirely localized at the base. These factors are significant.

3. Reference (c) states that damage to foliage can be caused by improper disposal of many herbicide drums. It is probable that the cause of damage is the volatilization of herbicide in the generator. It is recommended that all herbicide drums be removed from the Naval base and that precautionary measures be taken to preclude their use in the future.

R. L. [unclear]
BY [unclear]

401001 (1)

Copy furnished to
→ [unclear]

66-70

11,000,000 = 200,000 Drums
38

~~60,000~~
1,000

180,000
72,000 gallons

M.G.
119/m³

MAC
67-68
Supply clerk.
Cam Han Bay.
Dec. 67 - Mar 68

Ma
69 - 70 150

May 68 - Mar 69
→ HQ DANANG

MAY 71 - MAR 72
37th Signal
Long Binh / i

22 Sept 1 Jun 68
Aviation
Multi-Eng.
DANANG

71-72
MAC TERMINAL

NOV 67 - NOV 68
Transport NOV - JUL
JUL - Aug
Cargo Handler

10 JUN 69 - 20 NOV 70
Salvage Specialist
DANANG

10 MAR 69 - ^{MA} 68

JUN 70 - ^{MA} 71

Lot • Barge JAN 69.
OSAGE Ship FREE

Civil Affairs
Intell [Oct 70 - FEB 71]

19
15
11 3

Materials coded RED and BLUE are specific for defoliation of broad leaf plants. The material coded white is used for crop destruction and only a small quantity is used. Drums coded white are not considered hazardous to most plants in the city.

1. The defoliant arrives in Danang and is turned over to the 511 Ordnance Depot, ARVN. This Unit is responsible for moving the material to Danang Air Base.
2. The contents of the drums are transferred to underground tanks at the Air Base. The physical transfer is done by the 202 Handling and Loading Platoon, I Corps Hq., Danang.
3. We believe that the damage caused by residual material in the used drums can be minimized if the drums are burned out before they are brought into town.

We recommend action be initiated which will result in a prohibition against movement of these drums into Danang city and surrounding rural areas unless they have been properly cleaned.

We have personally recommended to the Chemical Warfare Officer, MACV/ICTZ that a flushing system be installed on the aircraft which are used to apply defoliants in the ICTZ. This will minimize damage to vegetable producing areas around and in Danang City.

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Folder: Defoliation File (70)